

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

**Rallies across U.S. demand
end to attacks on workers**

—PAGE 8–9

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 75/NO. 12 MARCH 28, 2011

Capitalist disaster devastates Japan

BY CINDY JAQUITH

March 16—Workers and farmers in Japan confront a mounting social disaster in the wake of the 9.0-magnitude earthquake, followed by a tsunami with 30-foot-high waves, which struck March 11. Explosions and fires erupted at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, where the energy monopoly Tokyo Electric Power Company (Tepco) has long disregarded safety in a reckless drive for profit.

The National Police announced today that since the tsunami hit, 4,164 people are dead and 7,843 missing. The actual toll is undoubtedly higher. The majority are residents of farming and fishing villages on Japan's north-east coast, many of them elderly, who received scant protection from inadequate seawalls once the tsunami hit. At least 430,000 people are in shelters.

Patrick Fuller of the Red Cross's International Federation told the London *Telegraph* that people are searching through debris to find food and "sleeping on strips of cardboards in

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Labor-farmer unity in Wisconsin

Working people stand up to assaults by state government



Militant/Frank Forrester

Tens of thousands rally in Madison, Wisconsin, March 12 to defend public workers—a "powerful expression of working-class solidarity."

BY FRANK FORRESTAL
AND REBECCA WILLIAMSON

MADISON, Wisconsin—A farmer-labor solidarity tractorcade, stretching for more than a mile, descended on Capitol Square March 12, with tens of thousands lining the streets cheering the farmers' arrival.

The streets surrounding the capi-

tol filled throughout the morning and grew to estimates of up to 100,000 people. They were protesting against Republican governor Scott Walker's signing into law of a union-busting bill the previous day. The demonstration capped four weeks of street pro-

**'We'll be fighting alongside
each other for years to come'**
—See article, p. 7

tests in defense of public workers by union members and their supporters at the statehouse and in cities throughout Wisconsin.

Contingents of teachers, hospital, university, transportation, and other public workers from all over the Midwest turned out. Workers from unions in steel, iron, electrical, construction, and meatpacking industries were also

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Keep on expanding labor solidarity

The big labor rally and tractorcade outside the Wisconsin Statehouse in Madison March 12 was a tale of two cities.

For many thousands of workers and

EDITORIAL

farmers, it registered determination to keep mobilizing and fighting antilabor assaults by the employers and their governments, in Wisconsin and

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Socialists begin effort to extend reach of working-class paper

'Militant' editor to become circulation director

BY PAUL MAILHOT

In the coming weeks and beyond, supporters of the *Militant* will be stepping up our efforts to reach workers, farmers, and youth with the paper. We'll be combining that campaign with an offer for new subscribers to get *Malcolm X*, *Black Liberation*, and *the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes for only \$10.

Regional teams are being organized to travel to areas

where workers are mobilizing to answer attacks on their unions—from Wisconsin, to Ohio, to California. And to Tahrir Square in Cairo, Egypt, too! (See article below.)

This effort is a response to openings to widen distribution of the paper

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Int'l team of socialist workers heads to Cairo

"I just returned from Madison, Wisconsin, this past weekend, meeting and talking to working people involved in the fight there, introducing them to the *Militant*," said Dan Fein, a worker at a pharmaceutical plant in New York. "Soon, I'll be doing the same thing in Cairo."

Fein is part of a team of socialist workers from the United States, Canada, and United Kingdom who will travel to Egypt to participate in the Tahrir Book Fair, March 31 through April 3. Paul Mailhot, editor of the *Militant*, is organizing the team, which will sell subscriptions to the paper, as well as books and pamphlets published by Pathfinder Press.

Hosted by American University in Cairo, the fair was "born from the joy of the Tahrir Square revolution," the organizers explain. More than 100 exhibitors are expected, most from the Middle East and North Africa. Thousands of titles will be on sale in Arabic, English, French, and other languages. Author signings, forums, and other events are planned.

"For those few days," organizers say, the fair will be "the largest and most diverse bookstore in the Middle East, situated on the corner of this now world-famous square."

—STEVE CLARK

Death penalty abolished in Illinois: A victory for workers

BY JOHN HAWKINS

CHICAGO—After foot-dragging for two months, Illinois governor Patrick Quinn finally signed into law March 9 a bill abolishing the state's death penalty. At the private signing ceremony at the state capitol in Springfield, Quinn told the press, "It is impossible to create a perfect system, free of all mistakes. . . free of all discrimination with respect to race or economic circumstances or geography."

The Illinois State Senate passed the bill January 11 during the same ses-

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Social impact of flood in Australia far from over

BY BOB AIKEN
AND JOANNE KUNIANSKY

BRISBANE, Australia—A month after major flooding here the impact on working people continues to unfold. These reporters saw street after street of empty houses in East Ipswich and elsewhere along the Bremer and Brisbane rivers, as many have been forced out of necessity to leave the area.

Some 12,000 houses across Brisbane were gutted and another 14,000 damaged in the floods.

Newly released official unemployment figures for December and January report that total employment was down by 22,000 in Queensland as bosses laid off many so-called casual workers. Downtown Ipswich was still deserted

and the main Coles supermarket was shut.

Although the initial cleanup appeared largely completed, home interiors were stripped bare, awaiting repair or abandoned as repair costs largely fall on working-class flood victims themselves. Rudi, a retiree in East Ipswich, explained that an elderly neighbor had to pay \$1,100 to get her electricity repaired and reconnected.

According to area residents, Moore's Pocket, a neighborhood on the other side of the Bremer River, was submerged under water during the last major flood in 1974. Yet local politicians opened it up for housing in the years since, only for the entire area to flood again this year.

The authorities gave no word to evacuate, leaving residents on their own, said one East Ipswich resident, who asked that her name not be used.

Volunteers from other parts of town were a "magnificent" help with the cleanup. "It's the bloody government that won't help you," she said. Like many others she hasn't received anything from the Queensland relief fund and had to pay hundreds of dollars to get her electricity reconnected.

Despite the end of a decade-long drought, the "cash drought" remains for most small farmers, *ABC Rural* reported. "Property values are going down. We've got no collateral. We can't borrow money," West Victorian grape grower Bob Bates told the national radio program. Farmers hit by the floods have said pasture lands will take years to recover.

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Issue no. 13

Includes:

♦ **Our Politics Start with the World**

by Jack Barnes

♦ **Farming, Science, and the Working Classes**

by Steve Clark

♦ **Capitalism, Labor, and Nature: An Exchange,**

by Richard Levins, Steve Clark

PathfinderPress.com



THE MILITANT

Defend immigrant workers in Libya!

Black Africans, who have long faced discrimination in Libya, have been targets of violence and mistreatment amid the unfolding civil war. Follow this fight in the 'Militant's ongoing coverage of the revolts across north Africa against tyrannical rulers.



Migrant workers stranded at the border between Libya and Egypt.

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Indiana students protest anti-immigrant bill



Militant/Alyson Kennedy

INDIANAPOLIS—Some 60 college students demonstrated here March 10 against an anti-immigrant bill before the state legislature. "SB 590 is similar to the Arizona anti-immigrant bill with provisions that allow cops to stop anyone for 'probable cause' and ask for documents," said Margarita Villa, a student at DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana, and one of the protest organizers. The bill also contains English-only laws that would eliminate translations of government documents, transactions, and meetings, she explained. Student protests were also organized that day in La Porte, Richmond County, and Bloomington. These were the first protests that Villa said were organized by Indiana Students United. The group is planning another demonstration at the state capitol on March 15.

—ALYSON KENNEDY

Imprisoned refugees fight for freedom, asylum in Australia

BY LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY, Australia, March 15—For the second night in a row, hundreds of refugees jailed at the Australian immigration prison on Christmas Island staged protest actions against their incarceration. On the evening of March 14 cops reportedly suppressed inmates with tear gas and rubber bullets.

A total of some 170 refugees broke out of the Australian immigration jail March 11–12 and organized demonstrations at the island's airport. Protests at the detention center were in response to the arrest of 10 alleged organizers of the escape.

Actions on Christmas Island follow protests last month against the Australian government's treatment of 22 asylum seekers jailed on the island since their boat sank in the Indian Ocean last December.

The refugees were brought to Sydney

to attend a funeral here February 15 for some 50 friends and family members who died in the shipwreck. The next day, supporters of refugee rights demonstrated outside the Villawood prison here to protest the Australian government's decision to send them back to the island prison.

Seena Akhlaqi Sheikhdost, a nine-year-old boy from Iran, lost both parents in the shipwreck. Despite pleas from family members in Sydney, he was returned along with the others to the Christmas Island immigration prison after the funeral. A day after the protest, however, Labor immigration minister Christopher Bowen announced that Sheikhdost would be released to relatives in Sydney.

There are 2,526 asylum seekers being held on Christmas Island and some 3,668 in prisons on the Australian mainland.

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Unions call rally against austerity measures in UK

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON—Rising unemployment, declining living standards, government austerity measures, and uncertainty about what the future holds for working people are swelling the numbers planning to join a major union protest in London, March 26.

The “March for the Alternative” demonstration has been called by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) in response to public spending cuts announced by the government last year. Hundreds of buses from around the country and “every available quality chartered train in the UK has been booked to come to London,” according to the TUC.

It’s important to “stand together in solidarity,” Sinead Dunn, a member of the Unite union in Scotland, is quoted as saying on the union’s website. “I’ll be attending because of the [government’s] cuts and treatment of the NHS” (National Health Service), said BMW auto assembly worker Sveto Prpa.

Workers are feeling the effects of six consecutive years of declining real wages, something not experienced in the United Kingdom since the depression conditions of the 1920s.

Official unemployment continues to hover around 2.5 million—nearly 8 per cent of the workforce—more than a year after the recession was declared over. Unemployment among those ages 16–24 is at nearly 1 million, more than 20 percent, according to official figures. Long-term unemployment and those forced into part-time work is growing.

All this before the full impact of the government austerity package kicks in, which includes plans to cut 330,000 jobs over the next four years. John Philpott, chief economic adviser at the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, calls it the “job-loss recovery.”

Following a 0.6 percent decline in gross domestic product in the last quarter of 2010, many are questioning if “recovery” is an accurate description, even from the capitalists’ point of view. “A weakening jobs market, muted economic growth, ultra-tight fiscal policy, plus well above target price inflation and the greater prospect of an interest rate hike sometime later this year provide all the ingredients for a ‘perfect storm’ to hit the UK economy,” Philpott said.

The end-of-March rally will be addressed by Labour Party leader Edward

Miliband, who was a member of the Labour government when grinding consequences of the economic crisis began to accelerate and affect broader layers of working people. Miliband says that the Tory–Liberal Democrat government cuts are “too far, too fast,” although his party had promised its own massive cuts to welfare if reelected.

The Labour leadership’s message for the upcoming demonstration was explained by Brendan Barber, TUC general secretary: “People marching on Saturday 26 March will make the case for a different programme that gives the economy time to grow, creates a fairer tax system and makes the banks pay their fair share towards closing the deficit they helped cause, and focuses on sustainable green growth rather than rolling back the state.”

Despite the class collaborationist positions of the march organizers, the demonstration will be an important opportunity for militant workers to meet up with others looking to fight and hungry for solidarity, and to develop ties for the battles to come.

Death penalty abolished in state of Illinois

Continued from front page

sion where it increased income taxes by 67 percent. With the signing of the bill Illinois became the 16th state to stop capital punishment. Thirty-four states still allow the death penalty, the fewest since 1978.

In the last decade three other states have abandoned the death penalty—New Jersey, New Mexico, and New York—either through legislation or court action.

Between 1976 and 1999, Illinois carried out 12 executions. Some 20 inmates have been exonerated and taken off the state’s death row in the last 35 years—the second highest number in the United States.

Quinn’s action makes permanent a moratorium on the death penalty declared in 2000 by one of his predecessors, Republican governor George Ryan. Ryan’s decision came in the midst of growing protests over the torture by cops in Chicago to extract confessions from suspects, most of whom were Black.

March in Montreal protests budget cuts



Militant/John Steele

MONTREAL—Tens of thousands of people from all corners of Quebec marched through downtown here March 12 to the offices of Quebec premier Jean Charest. The premier plans to present an austerity budget March 17 to the Quebec National Assembly that will deeply impact the living standards of working people.

More than 150 organizations, including Quebec’s three main union federations, and groups representing students, women, tenants, unemployed, and pensioners turned out to protest plans for a new health tax, tuition raises, additional fees for social services, and steps to privatize health care.

One student from McGill University carried a sign sent to him from his mother in Madison, Wisconsin, that read: “Stop the attack on Wisconsin families,” referring to the fight against the union-busting assault there.

—JOHN STEELE

It also came at a time when anti-death-penalty organizations, like the Center on Wrongful Convictions at Northwestern University, were widely publicizing the growing number of cases where people who had spent years on death row were exonerated.

According to Ryan, the 1999 release of Anthony Porter, a Black inmate who spent 15 years on death row and came within 50 hours of being executed, spurred him to take action on Illinois’s death penalty law.

Mark Clements, a leader of the Campaign to End the Death Penalty and the Jail Jon Burge Committee, told the *Militant* that he applauded the signing of the new legislation, “both the abolition of

the death penalty and the commutation of the sentences of the 15 men still on death row.”

“We still have to deal with the situation of the 23 men still incarcerated as a result of false confessions forced out of them by Jon Burge. Though they don’t face the death penalty their situation is still urgent,” he said.

Burge, a Chicago police commander who was convicted of lying about the torture he oversaw, will be reporting to serve his sentence on March 16. Clements said the Campaign to End the Death Penalty and other groups have called a rally to demand new hearings for the 23 that day outside the Cook County Courthouse.

England: Youth confront rightist anti-Muslim action

BY CAROLINE BELLAMY AND ANDRÉS MENDOZA

ROCHDALE, Lancashire, England—A couple hundred people confronted an anti-Muslim rally of some 500 here March 5. The rally was organized by the rightist English Defence League (EDL). Many of those at the counterdemonstration, organized by the Muslim Defence League, were students from the local area on their first demonstration.

Under the banner of opposition to “radical Islam,” the EDL has carried out a campaign against Muslim immigrants. When the rightist group organized a rally in Stoke-on-Trent last year, EDL thugs vandalized a mosque and threatened Asian cab drivers, effectively shutting down taxi service for five hours.

Haseeb Sheikh, 16, told the *Militant* why he had started the Muslim Defence League. “I went on a demo against the EDL in Manchester in 2009,” he said. “We didn’t see many Muslims or Asians

there. That’s why we decided to set up the MDL. We have a right to stand up, to defend our communities. Our slogan is ‘United we stand, divided we fall.’”

Students Ammara Mir and Juwiriyyah Karim came from Bradford, 22 miles away. “It’s important for Muslim women to be on the front line alongside our brothers,” Mir said. “There is pressure from the elders to stay away, but the EDL is attacking us. Someone pulled my hijab off me in the street.”

The next counterdemonstration against the EDL will be held in Blackburn, Lancashire, April 2.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco

Japan: Earthquake, Tsunami, Nuclear Crisis—Devastation for Working People. Speaker: Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., March 25, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

IOWA

Des Moines

Capitalists Responsible for Social Catastrophe in Japan. Speaker: Chuck Guerra, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., March 25, 7:30 p.m. 3707 Douglas Ave. Tel.: (515) 255-1707.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

The Fight against Women’s Oppression. Speakers: Camila Ruiz, Feminist Undergraduates at University of Washington, intern for NARAL Pro-choice America; Mary Martin, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., March

25. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. Suggested donation: \$5 dinner, \$5 program. 5418 Rainier Ave. S Tel.: (206) 323-1755.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

Workers in Wisconsin Mobilize against Union-Busting—A Fighting Example for Working People Worldwide. Speaker: Linda Harris, Communist League candidate for Fairfield in the NSW state elections. Sat., March 26, 6 p.m. Donation: \$4, unwaged \$2. 281-287 Beamish St., Campsie. Tel.: (02) 9718-9698.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

Civil War in Libya: Oppose ‘No-Fly Zone’—Imperialist Hands Off! Speaker: Annalucia Vermunt, Communist League. Fri., March 25, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5 waged, \$2 unwaged. 4/125 Grafton Rd. Tel.: (09) 369-1223.

—CALENDAR—

IOWA

Keokuk

Solidarity Rally and March with Workers Locked Out by Roquette America. Sat., March 26, 1 p.m. Keokuk Labor Temple, 3rd & Blondeau St. For more information, contact BCTGM Local 48G, (319) 795-0451, millman11@hotmail.com

Saudi troops come to aid of monarchy in Bahrain

BY SETH GALINSKY

Faced with growing demonstrations for democratic rights and an end to discrimination against Shiite Muslims, Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa declared a state of emergency March 14. The day before, some 2,000 troops and police from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates entered Bahrain to aid the monarchy.

Worried about the stability of its close ally, Washington has dispatched Adm. Michael Mullen, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Defense Secretary Robert Gates to Bahrain over the last few weeks to show support for the king, while urging some concessions in the hope they might stabilize the regime.

After opposition figures called the Saudi-led force an “overt occupation,” White House spokesperson Jay Carney stated, “This is not an invasion of a country.”

Bahrain is home to the U.S. Navy’s Fifth Fleet, which operates in the Arab-Persian Gulf, Red Sea, Gulf of Oman, and the Indian Ocean. The fleet is central to projecting U.S. military power in the Middle East and South Asia. Last May the Navy announced it planned to spend \$580 million to double the size of the base.

A small country of some 1.2 million, Bahrain is nevertheless a regional banking center. It also has one of the largest oil refineries in the Middle East, one of the largest aluminum smelters in the world, and strategic maritime trade ports. The regime rests on a narrow base of banking and oil-rentier capitalists among the Sunni minority. More than half the population is migrant workers, mostly from South Asia. Migrant workers are denied the most basic rights of citizenship and have not been part of the protest movement.

The antigovernment protests are based among Shiite Muslims, who are 70 percent of Bahraini citizens. Although there are some mixed neighborhoods and many Shiite-Sunni marriages, Shiites

face widespread discrimination in housing, jobs, and government services and are essentially banned from the army and police. The Bahraini armed forces and police are mostly Sunnis from Jordan, Yemen, and Pakistan.

While Bahrain is nominally a “constitutional monarchy,” the king appoints one of the two houses of its parliament and political and economic power is dominated by the al-Khalifa family. Districts for the elected house are gerrymandered to ensure that Shiite influence is diluted.

The size and persistence of the anti-government demonstrations have taken the regime by surprise. More than 100,000 demonstrators packed downtown Manama February 22, just days after security forces killed seven protesters. On March 13 thousands blocked the city’s financial districts.

Liberal *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof, who was in Bahrain during some of the protests, complained that the demonstrators “are overwhelmingly Shia” with little Sunni participation. But what really bothered him was that some protestors have raised not reforms but getting rid of the monarchy. “Imagine Bahrain without the al-Khalifas” read one sign Kristof saw. “That kind of thing is utterly inappropriate,” he wrote just days after the actions were attacked by the regime’s police.



AP Photo/Hasan Jamali

Thousands of women were among those protesting against government of Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa March 12 outside Safriya palace near capital of Manama. Sign reads, “Down with the government and 2002 constitution.” In front are several demonstrators wearing white burial shrouds with “I am the next martyr” written on them.

Unlike the other Gulf emirates, many trade unions are legal in Bahrain and there is a history of strikes, sit-ins, and other protests around wages and work conditions. The main union federation backs the antigovernment movement.

While Shiites are generally lower paid than Sunnis, migrant workers face the worst conditions. In an interview with the International Trade Union Confederation in December, union organizer Fadhel Abbas Ali said Bahraini con-

struction workers like himself made just under \$400 a month in 2004. But for the “80 percent of the workforce [who are] mainly Indians and Filipinos” the wage was \$185 a month or less.

Abbas said he was working to bring Bahraini and migrant workers into the union at Precast Concrete Company. Because the Indian workers are well organized, Abbas said, the government is replacing many of them with Vietnamese.

Libya: Imperialists divide on military action

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

With the Moammar Gadhafi regime digging in to hold onto power in Libya, the U.S. ruling class remains divided over whether to intervene militarily in the civil war there. Differences among the imperialist powers of Europe also continue to surface over how to reestablish stable political rule, as each seeks to position itself to continue profiting from the exploitation of this oil-rich but impoverished nation.

Meanwhile, the more than 1 million immigrants, most from sub-Saharan Africa, are among the millions of working people bearing the brunt of the Gadhafi regime’s violent repression.

We’re “slowly tightening the noose” against Gadhafi, President Barack Obama said, but “when it comes to U.S. military actions, whether it’s a no-fly zone or other options, you’ve got to balance costs versus benefits.”

In a public rebuke to the Obama administration’s stance, U.S. director of national intelligence James Clapper told Congress March 10 that Gadhafi’s superior military forces meant his “regime will prevail.” These comments, noted the *Financial Times*, “undermined a robust defence by Washington of its Libyan policy.”

Obama administration officials promptly rejected Clapper’s assessment. Republican senator Lindsey Graham, a member of the Armed Services Committee, called for Clapper’s resignation.

Meeting in Brussels March 10–11 NATO defense ministers failed to reach agreement on establishing a no-fly zone over Libya. Planning will continue, “but that’s the extent of it,” said U.S. defense secretary Robert Gates, who has been outspoken against such action.

The government of France announced

March 10 it was recognizing the opposition National Transitional Council based in Benghazi as the official Libyan government and has called for air strikes against Gadhafi forces.

An emergency European Union (EU) summit March 11 agreed to no longer recognize the Gadhafi government. At the same time, the meeting decided to consider the opposition as an “interlocutor,” not as representing the Libyan government, and did not back Paris’s proposal for military strikes.

Similarly, the White House has withdrawn recognition of the Libyan embassy in Washington, but has not said whether it intends to recognize the Libyan opposition.

U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton is meeting this week with representatives of the transition council. “We are attempting . . . to figure out who are the people that are now claiming to be the opposition,” she said, “because we know that there are some with whom we want to be allied and others with whom we would not.”

Among those leading the National Transitional Council are key figures from Gadhafi’s government who resigned when the civil war began in mid-February. They include former justice minister Mustafa Abdel Jalil, who heads the council, and former interior minister Gen. Abdel Fattah Younes.

Appeals to imperialist governments

Council leaders are appealing to imperialist governments to use air power to establish a no-fly zone in Libya. The Arab League recently made the same request to the UN Security Council.

More than 250,000 immigrant workers have fled Libya since the civil war began. Most have crossed into Egypt and Tunisia, with many stuck in refugee

camps, facing food shortages and abysmal living conditions. Some 20,000 are stranded at the border crossing into Tunisia, reported Associated Press.

Among those facing the greatest difficulties leaving Libya are workers from sub-Saharan Africa, who comprise the majority of the 1.5 million undocumented workers in the country.

Over the past decade capitalist rulers in Italy and Spain have sought to block sub-Saharan workers from entering their countries through deals signed with dictatorial rulers in North Africa.

In 2004 Gadhafi signed an agreement with the Italian government agreeing to prevent sub-Saharan Africans from using Libya as a country of transit. In return, the EU lifted its nearly 20-year-old economic sanctions and arms embargo on Libya.

A follow-up “Treaty of Friendship” was agreed to by the Libyan dictator and Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi in 2008. Under the pact Italy would invest \$5 billion in Libya. In return, Italy’s coast guard could intercept and immediately deport boatloads of immigrants back to Libyan shores, denying them the right to file asylum applications.

These agreements led to a sharp drop in immigrants reaching Italy’s shores from Libya. According to Human Rights Watch, returned migrants faced torture, incarceration, and ransom demands from smugglers.

With the onset of the civil war the Italian government suspended the “friendship” pact. It’s now calling for militarizing the Mediterranean Sea with a flotilla of warships from NATO and the EU that will not only enforce an arms embargo against the Gadhafi regime but attempt to halt migration from North Africa to Europe.

New International Magazine of Marxist Politics and Theory

Issue number 12

Includes: Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun

Today’s accelerating global capitalist slump—the opening stages of what will be decades of economic, financial, and social convulsions and class battles—accompanies a continuation of the most far-reaching shift in Washington’s military policy and organization since the U.S.

buildup toward World War II. Class-struggle-minded working people must face this historic turning point for imperialism, and draw satisfaction from being “in their face” as we chart a revolutionary course to confront it.

—\$16—

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Crisis of capitalism and the roots of Jew-hatred

Below is an excerpt from The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation by Abram Leon, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for March. Leon, an activist in the underground factory committees in Belgium during the Nazi occupation, was arrested in 1944 and deported to Auschwitz, where he was executed in the gas chambers. He was 26 years old at the time. The book traces the historical rationalizations for anti-Semitism to the developments that led Jews to become a "people-class" of merchants and moneylenders in the centuries preceding the domination of industrial capitalism. Leon explains how in times of social crisis renewed Jew-hatred is incited by the capitalists to mobilize reactionary forces against the labor movement and to disorient the middle classes and layers of working people about the true source of their impoverishment. Copyright © 1970 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY ABRAM LEON

The primary merit of the capitalist regime lay in its tremendous expansion of the productive forces, its creation of a world economy, its permitting an unprecedented development of technology and science. As against the stagnation of the feudal world, capitalism presented an unparalleled dynamism.



A group of Polish women and children wait to be led off by storm troopers during Nazi destruction of Warsaw, Poland, 1943. "If capitalism has given humanity certain tremendous conquests," writes Abram Leon, "only its disappearance can allow humanity to enjoy them."

Hundreds of millions of people, immobilized up to then in a routinized, horizonless existence, suddenly found themselves drawn into the current of a feverish and intensive life.

The Jews lived within the pores of feudal society. When the feudal structure started to crumble, it began expelling elements which were, at one and the same time, foreign to it and indispensable to it. Even before the peasant had left the village for the industrial center, the Jew had abandoned the small medieval town in order to emigrate to the great cities of the world. The destruction of the secular function of Judaism within feudal society is accompanied by its passive penetration into capitalist society.

But if capitalism has given humanity certain tremendous conquests, only its disappearance can allow humanity to enjoy them. Only socialism will be able to lift humanity to the level of the material bases of civilization. But capitalism survives and all the enormous acquisitions turn more and more against the most elementary interests of humanity.

The progress of technology and science has become the progress of the science of death and its technology.

The development of the means of production is nothing but the growth of the means of destruction. The world, become too small for the productive apparatus built up by capitalism, is constricted even further by the desperate efforts of each imperialism to extend its sphere of influence. While unbridled export constitutes an inseparable phenomenon of the capitalist mode of production, decaying capitalism tries to get along without it, that is to say, it adds to its disorders the disorder of its own suppression.

Powerful barriers impede the free circulation of merchandise and men. Insurmountable obstacles arise before the masses deprived of work and bread following the breakdown of the traditional feudal world. The decay of capitalism has not only accelerated the decomposition of feudal society but has multiplied a hundredfold the sufferings which resulted from it. The bearers of civilization, in a blind alley, bar the road to those who wish to become civilized. Unable to attain civilization, the latter are still less able to remain in the stage of barbarism. To the peoples whose traditional bases of existence it has destroyed, capitalism bars the road of the future after hav-

ing closed the road of the past.

It is with these general phenomena that the Jewish tragedy of the twentieth century is tied up. The highly tragic situation of Judaism in our epoch is explained by the extreme precariousness of its social and economic position. The first to be eliminated by decaying feudalism, the Jews were also the first to be rejected by the convulsions of dying capitalism. The Jewish masses find themselves wedged between the anvil of decaying feudalism and the hammer of rotting capitalism. . . .

Never has the situation of the Jews been so tragic. In the worst periods of the Middle Ages entire countries opened their doors to receive them. Today capitalism, which rules the whole world, makes the earth uninhabitable for them. Never has the mirage of a Promised Land so haunted the Jewish masses. But never was a Promised Land less capable of resolving the Jewish question than in our time.

The very paroxysm, however, that the Jewish problem has reached today, also provides the key to its solution. The plight of the Jews has never been so tragic; but never has it been so close to ceasing to be that. In past centuries, hatred of the Jews had a real basis in the social antagonism which set them against other classes of the population. Today, the interest of the Jewish classes are closely bound up with the interests of the popular masses of the entire world. By persecuting the Jews as "capitalist," capitalism makes them complete pariahs. The ferocious persecutions against Judaism render stark naked the stupid bestiality of anti-Semitism and destroy the remnants of prejudices that the working classes nurse against the Jews. The ghettos and the yellow badges do not prevent the workers from feeling a growing solidarity with those who suffer most from the afflictions all humanity is suffering.

And the greatest social explosion the world has ever seen is finally preparing the liberation of the most persecuted pariahs of our planet. When the people of the factories and the fields have finally thrown off the yoke of the capitalists, when a future of unlimited development opens up before liberated humanity, the Jewish masses will be able to make a far from unimportant contribution towards the building of a new world.

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Workers pay the price for capitalism's disasters

Below is an excerpt from “The Stewardship of Nature Also Falls to the Working Class: In Defense of Land and Labor,” a statement adopted by the 2007 national convention of the Socialist Workers Party. It addresses issues relevant to understanding the social catastrophe unfolding in Japan following the recent earthquake and tsunami, which were not just acts of nature whose consequences were inevitable. As the statement explains, working people bear the brunt of such disasters because of the class divisions and oppressive social relations that exist under capitalism. The statement appears in New International no. 14, a magazine of Marxist Politics and Theory. Copyright © 2008 by New International. Reprinted by permission.

Human hardship from natural occurrences, including calamitous “acts of god,” falls in starkly different ways on different social classes under capitalism. The effects are ruinous for working people in city and countryside, striking with exceptional ferocity against the toilers of the oppressed nations of Africa, the Middle East, Asia, the Pacific, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

The undersea earthquake and tsunami in the Indian Ocean in late 2004 wrought devastation from flooding beyond the power of human beings to avert. But it wasn't the sea or the shifting of the earth's tectonic plates that were to blame for the deaths of more than 225,000 people. That was not inevitable! It was the capitalists' production priorities together with the social conditions imposed on toilers living in coastal areas. With profit rates always at stake, accelerated exploitation comes before warning systems and evacuation paths. . . .

Nor do the spreading food riots in the opening months of 2008—from Indonesia to Pakistan and Egypt, from Haiti to numerous parts of sub-Saharan Africa—find their roots in calamities of nature. Not even the big-business media pretends the reason is primarily bad weather. With contemptible imperial arrogance, it claims that one of the main factors is that many more people in China and India are beginning to eat better!

But rising meat consumption is not why the world price of rice shot up nearly 150 percent in the twelve months between early 2007 and 2008. That's not why wheat prices nearly *quadrupled* since early 2006. That's not why the

price of corn and soybeans both have *tripled* since 2006. The truth is that plentiful food—grains, meat, fruits, and vegetables—can be cultivated to provide nutritious and affordable meals for every human being on earth and many more, *if* agriculture, food processing, distribution, and trade were organized not on a profit basis, but by the associated producers.

In early 2008, while hundreds of millions tried to survive on a daily handful of rice or corn, giant food commodities traders—through the Chicago Board of Trade and other major capitalist exchanges—were hoarding stocks of corn, wheat, and soybeans equal to *half the amount in all storage silos in the United States*, as well as enormous worldwide supplies of rice. . . .

This is not precautionary hoarding to prepare for times of drought, flood, or famine. This is hoarding by finance capital to reap windfall profits off the toil and misery of billions of working people. At the same time, enormous superprofits have also been reaped by giant world grain and seed trusts owned by U.S. and other families: Monsanto's profits were up 108 percent from a year earlier in the first quarter of 2008; Cargill's by 86 percent; Archer Daniels Midland's by 42 percent; and Bunge's by 1,964 percent (yes, *twenty-fold*. That's not a typo!).

Finally, the social disaster that followed Hurricane Katrina in 2005—ravaging low-lying parts of New Orleans inhabited largely by working people, most of them Black, as well as elsewhere along the Gulf Coast—shined a spotlight worldwide on the “values” of U.S. imperialism's ruling families and the state that serves their class. The moneyed rulers had known for decades that flood levees would give way when a strong hurricane hit near the city, yet they refused to dip into the surplus value they wring from the unpaid labor of working people in order to rebuild and reinforce the seawalls. Workers across the region, despite the acts of solidarity they displayed toward each other throughout the crisis, bore the deadly consequences of wretched housing; lack of emergency flood protection, transportation, and evacuation procedures; and longtime, morale-sapping cop corruption and brutality so endemic to life under the city fathers. . . .



New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, 2005. “So long as extraction of surplus value dictates production and distribution of wealth . . . rental housing for toiling majority will be built where propertied classes don't want to live,” explains Socialist Workers Party resolution.

In late 2006 a number of daily newspapers carried obituaries of a prominent U.S. geographer named Gilbert White. “Floods are ‘acts of god,’” White had written in 1942, “but flood losses are largely acts of man.” White's studies documented the fact that throughout most of the world the poorest layers of the rural and urban populations live on or near flood plains, either to scrape out a living or because better-protected areas are reserved for the propertied classes.

“Instead of simply building dams, levees and other controls that can actually encourage development in vulnerable areas, society should reduce risks by steps like discouraging such development,” one of the news accounts said, paraphrasing White. It continued: “‘The basic problem is how to get people off the flood plain,’ he said. ‘And after all these years, here we are with Katrina.’”

“Perhaps we may envisage a new kind of army,” White had said in his 1942 article, a global “peace force, of young people recruited and trained under international direction for the task of building healthy and prosperous communities.”

A worthy proposal. One deserving of the response, paraphrasing Ernesto Che Guevara: *To have an army of revolutionary rebuilders, you must first make a revolution.*¹ To forge a “new kind of army” of “young people recruited and trained for the task of building healthy and prosperous communities,” working people must first have a revolutionary

ethos, élan, discipline, and determination that is conquered only in the course of a successful fight for power. Without the victory of the Cuban Revolution in 1959, for example, the mass campaign that marshaled the enthusiasm and capacities of more than 100,000 youth in 1961 and wiped out illiteracy in a single year, transforming that generation of young people in the process, would have been unimaginable.

So long as the extraction of surplus value in warlike competition for profits dictates the production and distribution of wealth, land will remain private property and rental housing for the toiling majority will be built where the propertied classes don't want to live. It will be constructed where workers can “afford” the rent, including often on flood plains.

Only the leadership of a workers and farmers government, conquered in revolutionary struggle, can lead working people to even *face* confronting the vast worldwide pathologies of capitalism, let alone bring to bear their creativity, energies, discipline, and solidarity to cure them.

1. In August 1960 the Argentine-born leader of the Cuban Revolution, Ernesto Che Guevara, himself originally a physician, told a group of young medical students and health workers in Havana that “to be a revolutionary doctor . . . there must first be a revolution.” In *Che Guevara Talks to Young People* (Pathfinder, 2000), 2007 printing, p. 52.

Capitalist catastrophe devastates Japan

Continued from front page
temperatures of minus five [Celsius, 23°F].”

Bloomberg News reported that the Fukushima plant is the second-oldest in the country. It was scheduled to be decommissioned this year until the government gave it another 10 years of operation. Big business relies heavily on nuclear power because Japan lacks coal and oil. Fifty-four nuclear plants provide 30 percent of the country's power.

The companies running Japan's nuclear industry have a history of unsafe operations. An accident at a fuel processing plant in 1999 killed two workers. Five workers died in 2004 when a pipe burst at another nuclear reactor. An investigation showed the pipe had never been inspected in the 28 years the plant had been in operation. In 2007 the gov-

ernment shut down all 17 of Tepco's reactors after it was found to have falsified safety reports for two decades.

The Fukushima plant uses the controversial Mark I containment vessel for fuel rods, marketed by General Electric “as cheaper and easier to build,” according to the *New York Times*. But “the warnings were stark and issued repeatedly as far back as 1972: If the cooling systems ever failed at a Mark 1 nuclear reactor, the primary containment vessel surrounding the reactor would probably burst as the fuel rods inside overheated. Dangerous radiation would spew into the environment.”

In the midst of the nuclear crisis and destruction from the tsunami and earthquake, Japan's central bank announced it was putting the equivalent of \$423 billion into the banking system to assure

stability of stock markets.

But Matsumo Ito, a volunteer at an evacuation center in the city of Sendai, told the press the government rescue teams “haven't even brought us anything yet. And this is in Sendai, the biggest city in the region.” Many rice, fruit, and vegetable farmers have lost their crops and possibly sustained long-term damage to the soil. Gasoline, critical for travel in rural regions, is in short supply. The town of Yamamoto, home to apple and strawberry farmers, has no gas stations open and a shortage of kerosene for heat.

Thousands of factory workers are laid off. All 12 Japanese auto companies suspended production March 14, as did the auto parts, electrical, electronics, petrochemical, and steel industries.

Recommended reading

The Stewardship of Nature Also Falls to the Working Class



Socialist Workers Party Statement from New International Issue no. 14

“Human hardship from natural occurrences, including calamitous ‘acts of

god,’ fall in starkly different ways on different social classes under capitalism.” —\$14

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Today's union fights: How we got here and the solidarity we must keep building

'We're meeting workers we'll be fighting alongside for many years to come'

BY STEVE CLARK

"We met people at this action we'll be working with for many years to come," Alyson Kennedy told the *Militant*, after participating with more than 8,000 workers, unionists, and supporters in an Indianapolis labor rally March 10. The action was called by the state AFL-CIO in response to a union-busting bill now before the legislature there.

Kennedy, a Socialist Workers Party leader currently living and working in Chicago, has been involved in union battles in the coal mines and other industries since the late 1970s. Her response to the Indianapolis union protest reflects the realization of thousands of union militants and working people—engaged in labor actions from Indiana, Wisconsin, and Ohio to Florida, Tennessee, Idaho, Texas, and elsewhere—of struggles to come and who will be decisive in their outcome.

Footloose labor militants

It's not just public employees directly on the firing line who are rallying to these fights today. Far from it. Industrial workers and unionists, farmers, and youth and students—from every corner of the United States—have jumped into cars, vans, and buses, and onto airplanes. They've met up in Madison, Wisconsin, and other areas where the first showdowns between working people and the employing class are taking place since the sharp acceleration of the capitalist economic crisis in 2007.

This solidarity is in the traditions of footloose labor militants who helped build the industrial union movement. Kennedy reports that contingents of United Steelworkers (USW) members from mills in Gary, Indiana, and Chicago joined the Indianapolis action. Mobilizations in Wisconsin have drawn workers from Los Angeles and New York, as well as unionists engaged in their own battles—like members of USW Local 7-669 in Metropolis, Illinois, fighting a lockout by Honeywell at a uranium conversion plant, and members of Local 48G of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers, standing up to union busting by Roquette America in Keokuk, Iowa.

Workers from different parts of the country, from different industries and unions, are getting to know each other.

They're sharing lessons from battles, big and small. And they're going back to factories, mines, and other workplaces better armed to win support for these struggles from coworkers on the job and from their own and other unions.

Trying to turn the spigot off

That's exactly what is feared by the bosses, by their political organizations—the Democratic and Republican parties—and by top labor officials who carry water in the working class and unions for the capitalist parties, the Democrats above all.

To liberal politicians and union officials, demonstrations like those we're seeing are not a means to increase workers' solidarity, self-confidence, combativity, and class consciousness. Instead, they view these actions as a spigot to turn on or off to advance 2012 election prospects for the Democratic Party.

Right now they're looking to turn the spigot off.

Responding last week to the Wisconsin state senate's adoption of antilabor legislation, the liberal editors of the *New York Times* wrote: "Now union members have to make sure they do not stay away from the polls again when their rights are at stake."

Continuing its editorial cheerleading for assaults by governors in New York and other states on public employees' wages and conditions, the *Times* sheds crocodile tears for workers in Wisconsin, "especially once the unions had agreed to significant concessions on pensions and health care." The editors conclude that many workers "understand the power play" by Gov. Scott Walker and the Republican legislative majority. "The place to exercise some power of their own is at the voting booth."

What deals the biggest blow to labor is when words like these—and the course of action such words seek to justify—come from those posturing to represent the working class and unions.

In a March 10 speech at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka boasted that the Wisconsin bill's adoption would be "a galvanizing moment" for labor and benefit President Barack Obama's reelection in 2012. "Thank you, Scott Walker," Trumka said.

And in a *Wall Street Journal* column



Militant/Maggie Trowe

Unionists join rally in Madison, Wisconsin, March 12 backing public workers fight against union-busting legislation recently passed in that state.

a few days earlier, Trumka wrote: "So here's working America's message to governors like Scott Walker and New Jersey's Chris Christie: We believe in shared sacrifice. But we don't believe in your version of shared sacrifice, where the wealthy and Wall Street reap all the benefits of economic growth, and working people do all the sacrificing."

"Sadly," Trumka wrote, "a group of radical Republican governors is working overtime to export the most shortsighted private-sector labor practices into the public sector."

But the class-collaborationist course charted by Trumka is exactly how the working class and unions ended up in the crisis we're facing in the first place. It's how we got here.

Workers are the union

The working-class ranks *are the union*, not the officials. For decades the officialdom has blocked us from *using* the union power we conquered in gigantic labor struggles that built the industrial union movement in the 1930s and '40s—power reinforced by mass, working-class-based battles for Black rights in the 1950s and 1960s, and the impetus they gave to the fight for women's equality.

Instead of organizing the growing ranks of unorganized workers, union officials have sought to protect their dues base by taking giveback after giveback—"sacrifice" after "sacrifice" (for workers, not themselves)—in return for empty promises by the capitalist owners. They've negotiated "fringe" benefits for a steadily shrinking percentage of the working class, instead of mounting a mass social and political struggle in factories and in the streets to demand government-funded health care and pensions for all.

They've tied our jobs, wages, health, and retirement to the "productivity drives" and profits of what they falsely call "our industries" and "our companies." But those industries and companies are *not* ours—they belong to the propertied class that grows wealthy from the exploitation of workers and farmers.

The union officialdom pits us against fellow workers in other countries by pressing the demand to "protect American jobs," as they seek to garner patri-

otic support (even if occasionally with "criticism") for Washington's imperialist foreign policy and wars, from Afghanistan, to Iraq, and beyond. And they tell working people to help get out the vote for "friends of labor," especially in the Democratic Party.

What's the upshot?

The industrial unions have grown weaker year after year—the United Auto Workers, United Steelworkers, United Mine Workers, garment and textile unions, rail unions, and others. As 2011 opened, some 6.9 percent of workers for private employers were union members, down from 30 percent in 1965. And the bosses, backed by their government and political parties, are driving to push that figure down further—*much further*.

But some 36 percent of government workers are unionized. So public employees unions are in much better shape, aren't they?

The answer is "no." Workers, whoever employs us, need to understand why. That's necessary to wage an effective fight to defend our jobs, working conditions, pay, and unions.

The industrial unions were forged in battle as part of a mass working-class social movement in the 1930s. Labor was strengthened further by gains of civil rights struggles and fights for Black freedom in the 1950s and 1960s. These hard-fought conquests opened the way for millions of government workers to be unionized too—often brokered through deals with Democratic Party officials at the state, local, and federal levels, not through labor battles of their own.

Workers for a private boss can jointly withhold our labor power—we *can go on strike*—and deprive the capitalist owners of profits. Those profits come from one and only one place: from the wealth produced by the labor of workers in factories, mines, and mills and of working farmers on the land.

"One day longer!" became the battle cry in 1989 and 1990 of some 8,500 members of the International Association of Machinists in their 22-month-long battle against union busting by Eastern Airlines. *We can stay out one day longer than Eastern stays in business*. And they did.

The rank-and-file Machinists, with
Continued on page 10

Books for working-class fighters

The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions

by Jack Barnes

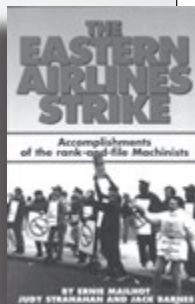
Building the kind of party working people need to prepare for coming class battles through which they will revolutionize themselves, their unions, and all society. A handbook for those seeking the road toward effective action to overturn the exploitative system of capitalism and join in reconstructing the world on new, socialist foundations. \$24

The Eastern Airlines Strike: Accomplishments of the Rank-and-File Machinists

by Ernie Mailhot

The story of the 686-day strike in which a rank-and-file resistance by Machinists prevented Eastern's union-busting onslaught from becoming the road to a profitable nonunion airline. \$12

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Rallies in states across U.S. demand

Indiana: 'We are union, fighting for everyone'

INDIANAPOLIS—"One day longer, one day stronger" and "We are union," chanted thousands of workers as they gathered March 10 for the largest labor protest here in years.

"The same thing that is happening in Wisconsin is happening here," Richards Winters told the *Militant*. "We have to offset it. We are here fighting for everyone." Winters, who is a member of Laborers Local 741 in Bloomington, Indiana, came on one of several union-organized buses from that area.

According to police estimates, more than 8,000 workers came from towns and cities throughout Indiana and the region to participate in the "We Are Indiana" rally. The protest was called by the state AFL-CIO and held in front of the state capitol building. Unionists have been rallying for almost three weeks inside the Indiana Statehouse to protest an antiunion assault led by Gov. Mitch Daniels.

A bill currently before the state legislature would limit teachers to bargain only on wage issues, not working conditions or other questions. It has passed the state senate and is waiting a hearing in the house. Another bill would exempt public construction projects from having to abide by established wage scales.

Although a bill banning collective bargaining for state employees died in this legislative session, several politicians say they intend to introduce it again later this year.

United Steelworkers (USW) Local 1010 at the U.S. Steel mill in Gary, Indiana, sent 10 busloads. Two hundred members came from USW Local 1014, which organizes workers at the Arcecor Mittal steel mill in East Chicago, Indiana, came to the rally. And USW Local 104 from Evansville, Indiana, sent four buses.

There were large contingents of workers from many other unions, including the United Auto Workers, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers,

Teamsters, Carpenters, Plumbers and Steamfitters, and the Laborers.

Some 70 workers locked out by the Honeywell Corporation in Metropolis, Illinois, were there. "We have had so much support during our lockout that we thought it was important to give it back and show support for other unions," said Christian Musselman, a member of USW Local 7-669. He told the *Militant* that they will be attending the March 26 rally for the locked-out corn refinery workers in Keokuk, Iowa, (see calendar on page 3).

Alma Wilkes, a member of the American Federation of Teachers and a teacher at a middle school in Gary, Indiana, came on the USW Local 1010 bus after reading about the rally in the local newspaper. "You see the far-reaching effects of what people don't have. Many people don't have health care, are working for minimum wage, are working two or three jobs just to survive," she said. "They don't care about people in the U.S. or people in other countries. They treat us pretty much the same way."

—Alyson Kennedy

Iowa: 1,000 rally against gov't attack on public workers

DES MOINES, Iowa—More than 1,000 workers and others joined a rally organized by the AFL-CIO inside the state capitol here March 7 to oppose a Wisconsin-style attack on unions. Several hundred stuck around after the rally to listen to a public hearing, where almost all those that spoke were against a proposed antilabor bill.

"Everything's going up—food, gas, electricity. They're blaming public workers and that's wrong," said Dan Johnson, president of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 2990. He came as part of a large contingent of workers from that union. More than 13 other unions were represented at the protest—from laborers, painters, and auto workers, to food and service workers.

If approved, the bill would encourage workers to quit the union and become so-called free agents. State workers' unions would be prohibited from negotiating health insurance plans, layoff terms, or retirement plans.

The bill would give the legislature or governor the power to veto decisions made by an arbitrator on labor disputes. According to some reports, public employees would have to pay up to 30 percent of their health insurance costs. This would amount to a substantial pay cut as most state employees don't pay for health coverage.

"They're starting to take our rights away," Kurt Brunner, a carpenter union representative from Local 790 told the *Militant*. "An injustice to one is an injustice to all."

On March 11 the state house of representatives approved the bill, known as House File 525. The legislation now goes on to the Democratic-dominated state senate.

—Rebecca Williamson

Florida: Actions in 30 cities back workers rights

MIAMI—Thousands of union members and supporters rallied in more than 30 cities across Florida March 8



Some 8,000 workers rallied at state capitol in Indianapolis March 10 protesting bills to limit collective bargaining.

to protest a raft of proposed legislation that represents an attack on the working class, especially state workers and the unemployed. The protests were called under the auspices of "Awake the State," a coalition of unionists, and others.

Citing a state budget deficit of \$3.6 billion, Gov. Richard Scott is proposing to reduce education spending by \$3.3 billion, cut state worker retirement benefits by \$1.4 billion, and slash as many as 8,600 jobs.

"Unions are joining together because that is the only way we have a voice," said Jillian Haring, a teacher for 12 years and member of the Broward Teachers Union at a rally of some 750 people in Ft. Lauderdale.

In Tallahassee 300 people gathered across the road from the state capitol. A number were students from Florida State University. Adam Reid, 27, said he was there "to protest the proposed budget cuts that are being made in order to give tax cuts to the corporations." Reid was referring to a proposal to eliminate \$1.7 billion in corporate and other taxes.

Nearby some 350 supporters of the governor held their own rally. They

were addressed by Governor Scott, Lieut. Gov. Jennifer Carroll, and other state officials. Many had arrived from other points in Florida on one of 12 buses sponsored by Americans for Prosperity.

"The government has got too big," said Aine Ryan, a self-employed soil analyst at the antiunion rally. "The bureaucracy now just works to protect itself. Public workers lost sight of what it means to be a public servant. They work for us, I don't work for them."

A popular chant at the governor's rally was "E-Verify, E-Verify," referring to a bill being discussed in the state legislature that would require bosses to use the federal E-Verify system to check the immigration status of workers.

After the pro-union rally disbanded, some went over the road to debate those backing the governor's proposals.

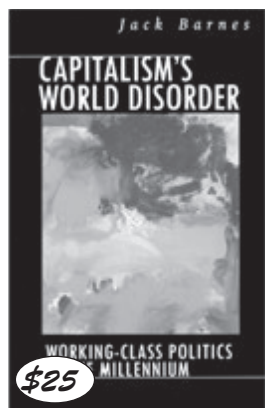
One proposed bill would eliminate tenure for teachers hired after July 1 and tie pay to "performance."

And two separate bills—HB-7005 and S-728—each have their own scheme to reduce the number of unemployed that receive jobless benefits.

—Dean Hazlewood

Capitalism's World Disorder

WORKING-CLASS POLITICS AT THE MILLENNIUM
by Jack Barnes



The social devastation and financial panic, coarsening of politics, cop brutality, and imperialist aggression—all are products not of something gone wrong with capitalism but of its lawful workings. Yet the future can be changed by the united struggle of workers

and farmers increasingly conscious of their capacity to wage revolutionary struggles for state power and to transform the world.

Communist Manifesto

by Karl Marx, Frederick Engels

Explains why communism is not a set of preconceived principles but the line of march of the working class toward power, "springing from an existing class struggle, a historical movement going on under our very eyes."



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California students, teachers protest cuts



Militant/Elizabeth Stone

SACRAMENTO, California—Thousands of students and faculty from California State universities and community colleges marched to the state capitol building here March 14 to protest a proposed \$1.4 billion cut to education funding.

—LEA SHERMAN

and halt to attacks on public workers



Militant/Alyson Kennedy
ve bargaining for teachers and other state employees.

Texas: Thousands rally against teacher layoffs, school closings

AUSTIN, Texas—More than 10,000 teachers, students, and others joined a spirited march and rally here March 12 demanding an end to layoffs of teachers and no school closures.

“We want our voice to be heard,” said Cedar Hill High School student



Militant/Jean Ulman
Demonstration in Austin, Texas, March 12 demanding end to teacher layoffs and school closures. “It’s raining” refers to proposals to allocate state’s \$9 billion “rainy day” fund to education.

Shalice Jenkins from Dallas. Inspired by the labor mobilizations in Wisconsin, she and her fellow students organized a school walkout the previous day. “We are protesting the budget cuts. They want to put 40 to 50 students in each class and shut down neighboring Bellevue Intermediate.”

State budget proposals under debate

in the legislature would leave public education more than \$9 billion short of the minimum funding required under current law. This could result in lay-offs of some 100,000 teachers and school closures in many districts, according to the Center for Public Policy Priorities.

Many of the participants were teach-

ers from the Dallas, Austin, and Houston areas, as well as the Rio Grande Valley. A professor from South Texas College who came with several busloads from McAllen, Texas, noted that “the anti-education legislators are also the anti-immigrant rights legislators.”

—Steve Warshell

Tennessee: 1,000 rally against gov’t layoffs, education cuts

NASHVILLE, Tennessee—More than 1,000 union members and supporters rallied at the state capitol here to protest against a range of legislation aimed against teachers and other public workers.

Busloads of unionists came from across the state, including the Tennessee Education Association, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, United Steelworkers, and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

The previous day Gov. William Haslam presented a proposed budget that would, among other things, cut nearly 1,200 jobs, reduce coverage under the state’s Medicaid program TennCare, and impose some \$20 million in cuts in higher education. This was the second rally in a week at the capitol.

—Sam Manuel

Working people stand up to assaults by Wisconsin state gov’t

Continued from front page

on hand. Unionists came from other parts of the United States and from Canada. Many unorganized workers marched with their signs supporting unions.

Students came from Wisconsin and from schools as far away as New York State. Middle-class professionals and some small business owners also marched to show their support.

Thousands carried handmade signs such as “Public workers you are not alone, we got your backs” and “Stop the war on working people.”

Glenn Scott, vice president of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees in Canada, traveled to Madison with two fellow union members. It’s important to build solidarity with this fight, he said, “In Alberta we have the same attacks on education, and cuts in health-care and child-care funding.”

Farmers join the fight

All morning the city was buzzing about the planned tractorcade in solidarity with Wisconsin’s public workers and against Governor Walker’s budget bill. After assembling some three miles from the capitol, crowds to greet the farmers began to gather along the route.

As the farmers driving the 53 tractors snaked their way toward the protest site, and despite bone-chilling winds, the protest grew and grew. Eventually thousands lined the streets chanting, clanging cowbells, waving signs of support, and giving solidarity salutes.

The Family Farm Defenders and the Wisconsin Farmers Union organized the tractorcade. “We’re determined more than ever to show solidarity, even after parts of the budget repair bill were passed so quickly,” said John Peck, executive director of Family Farm Defenders.

Sharp decreases in health care, known as BadgerCare, and cuts in funding for public education are two issues that have drawn the ire of many farmers.

“Around 11,000 farmers and family members will lose their health-care benefits,” said Randy Jasper, a farmer from Muscoda, Wisconsin. “This will hit the small farmers the hardest. They can’t afford anything else.” According to the Wisconsin Farmers Union, one in seven farmers depend on health coverage through BadgerCare for their families.

At the rally following the tractorcade, Tony Schultz, a farmer from Athens, denounced Governor Walker’s attacks on public education. He reported that 14 of 44 teachers in Athens, a small rural farming town of 1,100, had gotten “pink slips.”

Some of the farmers on the farm labor tractorcade included workers who either work as part-time farmers or are from farm families. Brian Borgrud, a grain farmer from Westville, Wisconsin, works part-time as a farmer, and pulls two 24-hour shifts as a union firefighter in Madison. While riding in his cab to the capitol, Borgrud told the *Militant* he has joined nine protest actions in the past month.

Like many others, Borgrud was picked up by the display of solidarity.

Sam Anderson, a retired member of Teamsters Local 695 who drove his tractor, said, “This is a wake-up call for labor.”

‘Political shenanigans at capitol’

Tod Pulvermacher drove his manure spreader more than seven hours to participate in the tractorcade. This sends a clear message, he said, about what “rural folks feel about the political shenanigans at the state capitol.”

What Walker calls the “budget re-

pair bill” is aimed at the rights of public workers to collectively bargain with the state over anything except wages. On March 10 the governor stripped all spending proposals from the bill in order to proceed to a vote. The legislature promptly voted to approve the measure 53-42. Public workers’ unions will now be barred from negotiating issues other than raising wages up to inflation and must submit to new union representation elections every year. These measures go into effect March 26.

The funding part of the bill that will be voted on contains major cuts in education and social programs.

Many demonstrators carried signs welcoming back and thanking the 14 Democratic state senators who left the state in response to the increasing demonstrations against the bill. Union officials have dubbed them the “Fab 14,” and they were featured speakers at the

rally. Their message was to end the street protests and “take this fight to the ballot box in 2012.”

Petitions are being organized throughout the state to recall eight Republican representatives. Many said they were in favor of a recall, but at the same time agreed the assault on working people and the unions is bipartisan. “They both have been taking away,” said Emily Anheier, 19, a student at University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee.

Following the tractorcade the Family Farm Defenders wrote on their website that the protest was a “roaring success.” At the same time, their statement said that “the struggle for justice is not over in Wisconsin, and this powerful expression of working-class solidarity from Wisconsin family farmers has given many more the heart and strength to stand up for what is right. . . . An injury to one is an injury to all!”



Militant/Zena Jasper
Students from New Paltz, New York, join tractorcade at March 12 rally in Madison.

Keep expanding labor solidarity

Continued from front page

beyond. That was one Madison.

But there was also another Madison, that of top union officials and the Democratic Party politicians in whose footsteps they follow. “Clear the streets,” is their message. “Turn out the vote in 2012 to win Democratic majorities in state legislatures and Congress and reelect President Obama.”

Michael Tate, chairman of Wisconsin’s Democratic Party, made no bones about it. “From a policy perspective, this is terrible,” Tate said of the new union-busting law. “But from a political perspective he [Republican governor Scott Walker] could not have handed us a bigger gift.”

The *Militant* is campaigning to get out the first message—the message of solidarity *in action*—to as many workers, farmers, and others as possible. We urge readers to join us in this effort.

The tractorcade of 53 farm vehicles at the March 12 action—organized by the Family Farm Defenders and Wisconsin Farmers Union—was an example of worker-farmer solidarity not seen in years. It’s not just that farmers, many of whom work full time for a wage to pay off farm debt and make a livable income, are hard hit by cuts in government programs.

Equally important, the farmers’ display of support for public employees helps open the minds of working people in rural towns and small cities across Wisconsin and elsewhere who’ve been swayed to one degree or another by false arguments pushed by capitalist politicians in both parties about public employees and their unions. It helps answer the lie that gains won by pub-

lic employees come at the expense of “taxpayers”—a classless catch-all papering over sharply different economic and social conditions of workers and farmers from those of better-off middle-class and professional layers and of ruling-class families themselves.

Class-conscious workers can’t fight effectively and win if we simply concede to the so-called tea party those working people, small shop owners, and others who feel the blows of the capitalist crisis but don’t yet see any alternative to those offered by one or another wing of the Republican or Democratic parties.

Nor can we defend our wages, job conditions, and unions if we follow the lead of union officials and others who tell us to put aside our struggles and get out the vote for the latest “friend of labor.”

Each issue of the *Militant* reports on upcoming actions by workers and farmers on the frontlines of struggles across the United States—this week, for example, a March 26 solidarity rally and march in Keokuk, Iowa, by union corn-refinery workers locked out by Roquette America (see ad on page 3).

It’s at picket lines, rallies, and other actions like these that workers and farmers get to know each other, share experiences, and compare notes on lessons we’ve learned from our struggles. Whatever the outcome of any particular fight, that expanding solidarity is something no boss can take from us if we don’t let them.

Those links, and the strengthened organization of our class forged by them, are our most important conquest today, whether in Madison, Indianapolis, Columbus, Keokuk, or wherever else we keep meeting up in the months and years ahead.

Effort to extend ‘Militant’ circulation

Continued from front page

as the struggles by working people to the mounting effects of the worldwide capitalist crisis continue to spread, from North America to North Africa. The *Militant* is a weekly working-class voice for these struggles. Its circulation builds solidarity and offers a way for workers to learn about each other’s struggles and discuss lessons that will help us move forward.

Beginning with this issue, as editor of the *Militant*, I am taking on the welcome responsibility to also serve as its circulation director. The aim is to help get the paper into the hands of those fighting to defend unions and workers rights, and of many others looking to these struggles. Among other things, I’ll be joining teams of socialist workers selling the press in working-class communities, at workers protests, and at other actions. I’ll write about those experiences for the paper.

Since the revolts in the Middle East and the union mobilizations to defend public workers in Wisconsin began in February, more than 400 people across the United States have subscribed to the *Militant*. These new subscribers were won by socialist workers not only at labor protests, but on the job, going door to door

in working-class communities, at plant gates, and on college campuses.

As an example of what we can expect, supporters of the *Militant* found a hunger for a socialist newspaper published in the interests of working people among the thousands of workers, farmers, and young people demonstrating in Madison, Wisconsin, March 12.

Many were drawn to the paper’s coverage of the fight against the state government’s attacks on public workers and other struggles. They were open to discussing the paper’s editorial stance rejecting the arguments by the bosses’ government and political parties, too often echoed by the labor officialdom, that workers must “share the sacrifice” to solve the capitalist crisis.

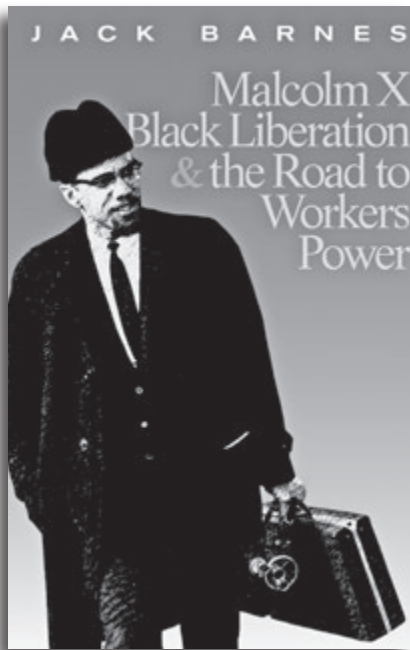
In all, 561 issues of the *Militant* were sold at the March 12 demonstration and in Madison neighborhoods the next day, with 100 workers, farmers, and students deciding to buy subscriptions. Thirty-two participants took advantage of a special offer to buy *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes with an introductory *Militant* subscription, for a combined price of \$15. Some 30 supporters of the *Militant* joined the sales effort, many of whom contributed to this article.

“I came here after 27 days of watching rights stripped from workers,” Roger Stevens, a farm laborer in Pardeeville, Wisconsin, told the *Militant* at the March 12 action. “I am not a union worker, but I know a lot of teachers, and I wanted to support them.” He was buoyed by the rally and decided to subscribe.

We look to enlist everyone who values a working-class voice in politics to help use the *Militant* as a tool of the struggles unfolding today. Join us in this effort. Write to the *Militant* with suggestions, and contact distributors listed on page 5 to get on a team soon.

Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power

by Jack Barnes



“This is a book about the dictatorship of capital and the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat. A book about the last century and a half of class struggle in the United States—from the Civil War and Radical Reconstruction to today—and the unimpeachable evidence it offers that workers who are Black will comprise a disproportionately weighty part of the ranks and leadership of the mass social movement that will make a proletarian revolution. . . .”

Special offer: \$15
For the book and a 12-week
subscription to the *Militant*
(50 % off book cover price of \$20)
Contact distributor listed on page 5

PathfinderPress

Union fights today

Continued from page 7

solidarity from other workers and unionists, forced Eastern to shut its doors and defeated management’s effort to turn it into a profitable nonunion airline.

Teachers and other public employees don’t have that option. They and their unions sometimes succeed in shutting down schools, government agencies, or hospitals for a period, but that doesn’t touch the capitalists’ bottom line. They can’t stay out “one day longer” than local, state, or federal governments, which won’t go out of business. What’s more, the employing class cynically plays on the challenges facing government workers unions in sustaining broad public solidarity for an extended strike closing schools, medical facilities, and other state services working people rely on.

As the post-World War II capitalist expansion began to sputter in the early 1970s, the bosses first took aim at the industrial workers and unions that account for a lion’s share of their profits. Having dealt heavy blows to those strongholds of labor, the employers, their governments, and their political parties began turning their fire on public employees unions as well.

Struggles to reverse the decline of the industrial unions are essential to stemming assaults on government workers and their unions.

Cops aren’t workers or unionists

The capitalist parties and politicians take a different class approach toward cops and prison guards, who serve and protect the propertied rulers’ class interests by force and violence.

In Wisconsin, Indiana, and Idaho, for example, union-busting bills seeking to gut collective bargaining exempt cops and police associations. (They also exempt firefighters who—while not serving the repressive role of police—do perform duties vital to the rulers’ property interests and often identify with cops as members of the “uniformed services.”)

Since cops often come from families of workers, working people can be misled to overlook the pro-employer, anti-working-class function of the police—until, that is, they are hit upside the head by a billy club or pistol-whipped on a picket line, hauled off to jail, or targeted for random cop brutality on the streets of a working-class neighborhood.

It takes time and class-struggle experience for such lessons to be internalized by growing sections of the working class and union movement.



Contrary to Trumka and other labor misleaders, the way forward for workers and the unions is not to divert and dissipate workers’ time, energies, and resources through efforts to reelect President Obama and restore Democratic Party majorities in Congress, state legislatures, and city halls.

That was the purpose of the heroes’ welcome staged by Democrats and union tops at the March 12 action in Madison for 14 state senators who went into self-imposed (and self-aggrandizing) “exile” in Illinois for a few weeks, while their Republican colleagues put new antiunion legislation on the books.

That’s also the aim of the bombast about “recalling” Republican state legislators and Governor Walker—demagoguery that largely marks time until the labor officialdom goes all out for a Democratic “comeback” in 2012.

But the current round of antilabor attacks by state governments—and resistance by public employees unions and supporters—are still under way in the Midwest and other regions.

What’s needed is for working people to hit the road and bring solidarity to actions by these embattled workers. Bring other working people with you—government workers and those working for a private boss; employed and unemployed; native born and immigrant; whatever your skin color or sex.

Help organize support from your unions. Encourage more tractorcades by farmers, like the one in Madison March 12.

Join picket lines and rallies by locked-out workers in Metropolis, Illinois; Keokuk, Iowa; and Flatbush Gardens in Brooklyn, New York.

Reach out to students and other young people.

By doing so, we’re not only helping to spread solidarity and extend the lines of working-class resistance today. We’re also sowing the seeds of battles—fighting shoulder to shoulder—for many years to come.